

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: United Way of Dane County

Application ID: 14AC155550

Program Name: Achievement Connections

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant clearly described that completion of Algebra by 10th grade is one of the indicators of graduation.

Significant disparities were highlighted amongst racial group completion rates at 81% White, 77% Asian, 46% African American and 46% Hispanic. The proposed programs will address the need to improve academic performance in mathematics.

The applicant presents significant evidence of need in the target area noting nearly 75% of all children live in poverty.

The applicant documents prevalent and severe need in the area reporting the average grade in algebra of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch was 1.68.

The applicant presents compelling evidence of need noting the average grade in Algebra for African American and Hispanic students was 1.81 and 1.75 respectively.

The applicant presents significant evidence of need reporting that the target area repeatedly ranks near the bottom in national studies on the extent of racial and ethnic disparities in life outcomes.

The applicant organization provides an abundance of evidence which clearly demonstrates a need for their proposal in the target service area. The narrative clearly describes the residents of the service area and their economic disparities, plight and life outcomes.

The applicant organization documents the target population as ranking near or at the bottom in the extent of racial and ethnic disparities using criteria from a national study.

The applicant organization clearly demonstrates disparities in the graduation rate for the target school districts which include 87% White, 82% Asian, 63% Hispanic/Latino and 55% African American as documented in a study conducted for the school year 2011-2012.

The applicant organization provides evidence of a shift in minority growth in the target service area from 27% to 55% from 1995-2012, which supports an increased need of services for target population Members.

The applicant noted that AmeriCorps members would provide services for the students and that the intended outcome of service will assist over 4,000 students in mathematics.

The applicant presents data to support AmeriCorps members as highly effective means to solve the community problem noting the positive impact tutoring has on math for at-risk youth. Additionally the application describes the dramatic gains on math exams after one-on-one or small group tutoring, highlighting data to support the importance of dosage of tutoring on student achievement.

The applicant proposes to engage the Members in tutorial services utilizing technology.

The applicant has provided data which describe the benefits of using technology to impact math skills.

The applicant organization provides a variety of documented studies from credible sources that support that their proposed services, delivered via the AmeriCorps members, will have a positive impact on the community in addition to the target population Members.

The applicant specifically detailed performance data of past program operation success. The applicant discussed continuous improvement efforts to identify past performance and goal setting for following years.

The applicant's data provided from previous years of experience support and show a positive impact on student enrollment and retention rates.

The applicant provides narrative which clearly demonstrates their ability to perform administrative and managerial functions required in program operation by documenting previous management of an AmeriCorps program for three years and meeting performance goals each year.

Weaknesses:

The application's information presented was not impactful in addressing the need to make a significant impact on the target population. For example, measurable improvement in math was not met, pre and post assessment results for students were only provided in the spring semesters.